

a CHARITY Without OVERHEAD

LIKE Portia's candle, work of the Torrance Relief Society has been carried on these last 19 years, with its good deeds radiating throughout the community and nearby territory, yet so quietly has it functioned that hundreds of Torrance citizens today are unaware of its existence.

Unique in many respects among relief organizations, this society has earned a place in the hearts of the community, and only now is its story being fully told.

It was not easy to learn the details. This reporter had heard of its record from many sources, but the good ladies who founded and built the society were extremely reticent about having its history recorded. Not until it was pointed out that their work was so distinctive, so worthy of special mention, would they release the facts for publication. And even then, some of them were distinctly reserved.

Unique Points

WHAT, then, are the particular points in which this society has become a noteworthy model? For one thing, every single penny ever contributed to them has gone 100 per cent into relief; not a cent to overhead. For another, Torrance has never had a deserving case the needs of which have not been fully attended to without quibble or red tape.

For a third, recipients of this work have not had their names bandied about. There are, for example, several prominent, fairly wealthy Torrance families today which, in their early days in the community, were deserving of, and received, a helping hand from this society—families whose secrets would, because of their present prominence, provide splendid food for a Winchell. Yet their secrets are, properly, safe and will never be told. Probably only one person knows them and she was the worker who investigated the cases when the need was present.

On the other hand, it is only fair to state that every one of these cases has cleared its debt to the society, and many of them today are among the most lavish donors toward its work.

Spontaneous Inception

THE TORRANCE RELIEF SOCIETY was not founded. It was a spontaneous movement which developed during the World War. At that time Torrance, like all other cities, had its local Red Cross chapter. But, as an infant city, it was not permitted to function solely for the soldiers, sailors and marines from Torrance. Instead, its work was consolidated with that of Los Angeles.

In order to meet this situation, the Torrance Relief Corps

How far that little candle throws its beams!

So shines a good deed in a naughty world . . .

So doth the greater glory dim the less;

A substitute shines brightly as a king.

Until a king be by; and then his state

Empties itself, as doth an inland brook

Into the main of waters.

—Merchant of Venice.

was formed, November 3, 1917, "to supply needed comforts and necessities for the enlisted and drafted men from Torrance."

Chairman of the first meeting was George A. Proctor, with Mrs. Dorothy Brenton secretary. Its first committee for relief work included Dr. J. S. Lancaster and Mesdames Isabel Henderson, Antoinette Steinhilber, Carrie Morford, and Helena Torrance. The first soliciting committee was composed of Dr. Lancaster as chairman and Messrs. George A. Proctor, Alfred Gourdier, A. H. Bartlett and James Byrnes.

In addition to sending Christmas cheer and clothing overseas, the corps provided for a French orphan for three years and raised \$190 at a dance which was sent to a French family known to be in distress. A house-to-house canvass by

the women resulted in funds for the purchase of the large flag used on holidays on the memorial flagpole.

Corps Become Society

WHEN the war ended the corps did not. A truckload of clothing was ready for shipment to Belgium when the influenza epidemic struck. This was diverted to local needs and brought home to the members the fact that there was a peacetime need for an organization. The corps was, therefore reorganized as the Torrance Relief Society and its membership was confined to women.

Meeting weekly, at the homes of members, all its charities were carried on anonymously. A visitor at any of the meetings would have been unable to detect the name of any of the recipients. One member was delegated to investigate each suggested case, known only by number and so recorded in all the society's books. Never was the name of the recipient divulged or mentioned.

Funds for the work were, at first, contributed by the members. But in 1926 a committee of businessmen, seeing the wonderful work which was being accomplished, volunteered to assume the responsibility of an annual drive which was later supplemented by funds from Torrance Com-

munity Chest drives. This committee was headed by the late G. W. Post, aided by Sam Levy.

Thousands of dollars have passed through the hands of the society, accounted for to the last penny in its books, annually audited at a local bank. While the government has, to a greater or less extent, taken over many of the duties of the society in recent years, there still exists a need such as in cases not qualified under the government program, or cases pending action by the governmental authorities. The society, therefore, carries on and will continue to carry on as long as there is anything it can do. Communications may be addressed to the Torrance Relief Society, 1804 Gramercy avenue.

Presidents of the society from the time of its inception have been Mesdames Steinhilber, Woodington, Brown, Campbell, Lancaster and Collins, while other officers have included Mesdames Byrnes, Gay and Lessing, and Miss Byrnes. In addition to those named on the first committee, members past and present are Mesdames M. Beckwith, Allie Busch, John Crossland, George Dolton, Zadie Hastie, Luther Hyde, William Klusman, Ben Olsen, Carrie H. Parks, Frank Paour, Mary Perkins, Mary Peterson, John Sullivan, John Tolson, Brady Wolfe, Nellie Zuver, Miss Brown and many others.



THE past 25 years have brought much progress to this community and the nation. Likewise great advancements have been made in the field of Medical Science and Surgical Skill.

It has been the earnest endeavor of local physicians and surgeons, through constant study and training, to keep abreast of this progress, and to augment their knowledge with the most modern technical equipment.

Physicians and Surgeons
of Torrance